

Testimony Before the  
Connecticut General Assembly Appropriations Committee  
Regarding the 2024-25 Budget for  
Elementary & Secondary Education

February 23, 2023

Stephen Tracy  
Interim Chair  
Danbury Charter School Planning Team

Chairpersons Osten and Walker, Members of the Committee:

My name is Stephen Tracy. I am a retired public school teacher and former Connecticut school superintendent. I am here today as the Interim Chair of the Danbury Charter School Planning Team. As you may know, the State Board of Education approved our application to establish a public charter school in Danbury in 2018. This is our fifth year appealing to the Governor, to you and the other members of the General Assembly to include funding for our school in the state budget.

Why have we persisted over all these years to get our school off the ground? Why does our school enjoy the support of the Mayor of Danbury, a majority of the Danbury City Council and the Danbury Board of Education? More importantly, why do hundreds of Danbury parents continue to support the creation of this new public education choice for their city?

1. We offer the ambitious instructional program in the form of the International Baccalaureate curriculum;
2. We are committed to delivering this program to a diverse group of students reflective of Danbury's population;
3. In John Taylor of Elevate Charter Schools, we have joined with a management partner who has a record of success in creating and leading quality, diverse public schools of choice here in Connecticut and elsewhere;

4. With an eventual enrollment of 770 students in grades 6 through 12, our school will be an important part of the solution to the overcrowding problem that has challenged the Danbury Public Schools for years;
5. We have attracted a \$25 million pledge from a local benefactor toward the construction of a brand new public school facility for our students – which will be built at no cost to the taxpayers of Danbury;
6. Our school will represent an attractive choice for teachers, meeting or exceeding the compensation offered by the local district, participating in the state's teacher retirement program, offering a first rate program of professional development and respecting collective bargaining rights;
7. The arrival of our school will bring millions of state charter school dollars to Danbury for the first time, and will actually result in an increase in per pupil revenue for the Danbury Public Schools;
8. We are committed to locating our school in downtown Danbury, so as to contribute to the economic vitality of that important part of the city; and
9. We seek to work in partnership with the Danbury Public Schools to promote the educational interests of all of the city's children.

For all of these reasons, we ask you to find a place for our school in the FY 24-25 budget. We are prepared to keep this up for another five years if we have to. But we hope, with your support and that of the Governor Lamont, that that will not be necessary.

Thank you.

Stephen Tracy  
Goshen, Connecticut